

University of Southern California

USC Minority Services Research Group

Center Description

The Minority Services Research Group (MSRG) is a multidisciplinary research group that seeks to improve access to quality mental health care for underserved, minority populations. Based at the USC Department of Psychiatry, the MSRG is an umbrella organization that includes academic researchers from multiple institutions as well as community partners collaborating on several research projects. Its stated mission is “to improve the lives of underserved minority populations through community-based, culturally sensitive, patient-centered intervention research that aims to reduce disparities in access to quality mental health care.”

The MSRG maintains a close relationship with the UCLA Health Services Research Center. Dr. Isabel Lagomasino heads the MSRG and received her training in the NIMH UCLA Faculty Scholars Program, directed by Dr. Ken Wells. All ongoing MSRG research grants include the key participation of Center faculty and staff. In addition, the MSRG receives a subcontract from the Center, the LAC+USC Research Development Unit, whose aims are to develop and evaluate evidence-based, culturally appropriate, and sustainable quality improvement interventions within county agencies and to support the research career development of investigators working within these agencies. While helping provide needed research infrastructure, this tie has facilitated mentorship from senior faculty at UCLA and RAND as well as research opportunities and mentorship for residents, post-doctoral candidates, and junior faculty.

The future goal of the MSRG is to secure national funding as a developing research center. Such a center would provide research infrastructure for academic and community partners to engage in future research focused on addressing the critical health care needs of underserved minority communities and would provide valuable research training opportunities for medical students, residents, post-doctoral candidates, and junior faculty.